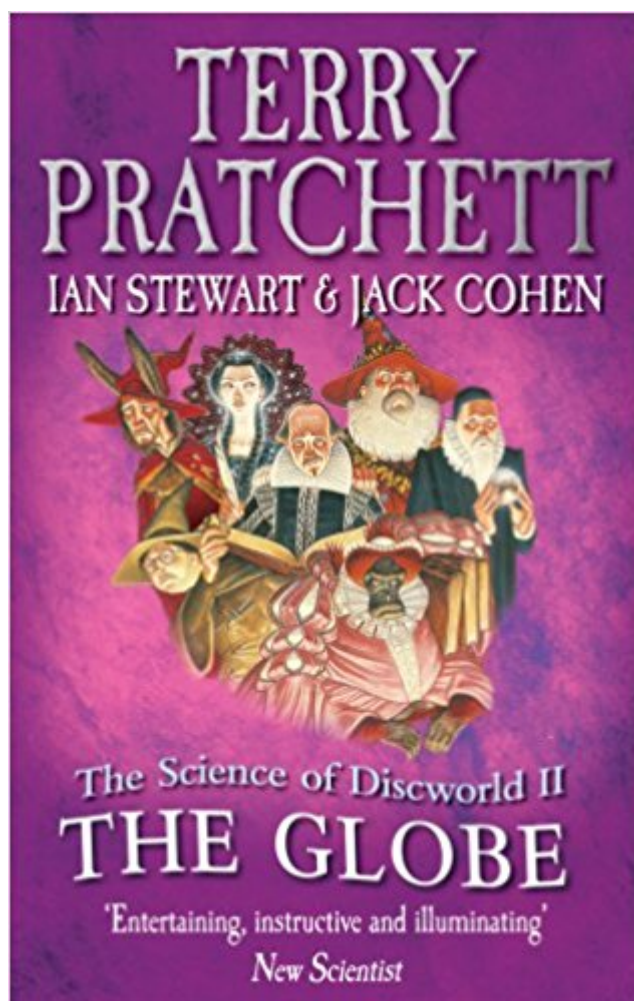




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The Science Of Discworld II: The Globe



Synopsis

The sequel to the bestselling Science of Discworld. The acclaimed Science of Discworld centred around an original Pratchett story about the Wizards of Discworld. In it they accidentally witnessed the creation and evolution of our universe, a plot which was interleaved with a Cohen & Stewart non-fiction narrative about Big Science. In *The Science of Discworld II* our authors join forces again to see just what happens when the wizards meddle with history in a battle against the elves for the future of humanity on Earth. London is replaced by a dozy Neanderthal village. The Renaissance is given a push. The role of fat women in art is developed. And one very famous playwright gets born and writes *The Play*. Weaving together a fast-paced Discworld novelette with cutting-edge scientific commentary on the evolution and development of the human mind, culture, language, art, and science, *The Globe* presents a fascinating and brilliantly original view of the world we live in. The scene of the final epic battle is the first production of *A Midsummer's Night Dream* at the Globe Theatre.

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Customer Reviews

"A book in which the hard science is as gripping as the fiction." --The Times

The sequel to the bestselling Science of Discworld. The acclaimed Science of Discworld centered around an original Pratchett story about the Wizards of Discworld. In it, they accidentally witness the creation and evolution of our universe in a plot interwoven with a Cohen & Stewart non-fiction

narrative about Big Science. In *The Globe*, the same structure applies, only this time the themes are Human Science: History, Origins of Language, Archaeology, Anthropology, Evolutionary Psychology and, overall, the importance of Story to our culture (and of course to all Pratchett fans). There is a well-known theory that there are only seven stories known to man. The Elves of Discworld have discovered an eighth ? a story of awesome power ? which they play out on Roundworld (Earth) in their attempt to defeat the Witches of Discworld. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The book reads more like a textbook than a novel, and the reader should not approach this as he/she is when reading Terry Pratchett's Discworld regular series. I previously picked up the book first thinking it would be an easy read, and had to give up due to lack of interest. I picked up the book several times since but haven't been able to finish. That being said, the contents of this book is extraordinary in its nature, certainly has been a delight when reading the chapters and following Terry Pratchett's logic.

I am generally a fan of Terry Pratchett's work and loved the preceding merging of a Discworld story with basic scientific explanations. Sadly, as interesting as elements of the science chapters were, they became horribly tedious, rambling, and repetitive even before they got to the section on Judaism. Like many assimilated Jews, they regard Judaism with an intense and deeply irrational paranoia. Before I continue, I should point out that I am in not way related to Jews or an adherent to Judaism. I just think that many Jews fail to understand Judaism in its intellectual and historical context. As fascinating as a short story about a scientist using logic circuits to evolve a more advanced means of replicating a signal, the section on Pan Narrans deviated from a discussion of humans advancing by telling stories (an idea I am intrigued by as a student of History) and into a lengthy and frequently absurd complaint against Judaism. I think much if has to do with Mr. Cohen. I seriously doubt any similar complaints would be issued against Bhaal, Marduk, or Jupiter. The general gist of the complaints were that Judaism: "stifled creativity", repressed people's spirits, was horribly legalistic, and led to religious wars. Given that the authors, like Mr. Pratchett, are atheists, these are likely key elements of their generalized view of all religion. As a student of History (as I do not have a PhD or a specialized job, I cannot call myself a historian), I know that the various religions in the past (not to mention present) were very different. Not least of these differences was human sacrifice. Almost every society in human history has practiced human sacrifice as a legitimate means of honoring or bartering with the "gods". Judaism (and the Romans for different

reasons) was radically different. People have supposed that Abraham was confused why God told him to sacrifice his son. He couldn't have been because that was NORMAL procedure among neighboring peoples. Given that Judaism prohibited human sacrifice, prostitution, and sexual slavery, I consider Judaism to have been a most favorable development in human history. Nonetheless, Mr. Cohen seemed infuriated when an Israeli asked what it must have been like to be a descendant of the Cohens (an ancient religious caste in Hebrew society that still provided most of the rabbis and religious leaders even in the 1800's). Mr. Cohen's response was one of great shame at what his ancestors must have done in condemning other people and generally being repressive. The only real grounds I can find for such a view exist not in classical history (when the Cohens really existed as a religious office) but in the sometimes insular world of the Polish shtetl where some Jewish communities were dominated by charismatic rabbis with more influence than sense. Even still, others shtetles had more reasonable rabbis who did not threaten to cast people out for disagreeing. I suspect that Mr. Cohen is unreasonably conflating the two periods in his mind and fails to understand the moral philosophy of Judaism. One of the excellent points made in the book (or is it the earlier book?) is that under polytheism, you needed a theopsychologist to understand the weather. Monotheists just needed a regular observation of the weather because they assumed some continuity in natural laws. There are wonderful elements in the book. The idea of Pan Narrans is interesting (although like many people excited by their ideas, they go too far and assume it explains everything) and is worth considering. Many smaller lessons such as the process of evolution and the nature of life is portrayed in a wonderfully simple and easy to understand manner. The book outside of Pan Narrans and Mr. Cohen's rant is a good and worthwhile read. I would have given it four stars had it not been for the repetitiveness of their Pan Narrans idea and the historically absurd accusations against Judaism.

I am probably biased. I adore and admire intelligent and informative writing which tackles complex subjects in a form that the uninitiated can readily comprehend... Messrs. Pratchett, Stewart and Cohen are masters at this rather obscure area of current literature. The concept of humans requiring 'narrativium' (or a story-structure into which they can fit the wilder excesses of their ambitions) had long been a subliminal conviction for me and here I found it artfully described. If you happen to have an unshakably conventional world-view then perhaps this book won't have the same impact. Some readers might find the discussion of faith topics sacrilegious; all I can say to this is that I am sure your god (or gods) will probably commend your curiosity and might take your enhanced sense of wonder at the universe into mitigation. Buy the entire 'Science of Discworld' series. Read them, think

about them, read them again. Ask questions... Never stop asking questions.

If you have come to be interested in, and sort of understanding of, science at your ripe old age, these Discworld science books are for you. Read them for yourself and then make sure you read them to your children and/or grandchildren. Hey, they do get a wee bit complicated every now and then, just re-read the chapter. The series should be put alongside the text books of children starting their science classes right the way up to those who think they know everything.

Fun and intellectually stimulating.

I read 'Thud' first then within 30 day read in what I thought was the correct order every other Terry Pratchett Discworld book. This was before Christmas 2010 and my kindle so I have a complete collection. Not entirely true. Forgot about the UK. exclusive editions. I'm happy that I read Lawrence Watt-Evans, 'The Turtle Moves', Discworld summary. I found out about the Science of Discworld there and had to have them. Also , my order for reading series was very similar to Mr. Watt-Evans's. Ordering a used book for the second time with less anxiety I was thrilled to receive a very good hard cover edition. I'm a big fan of both authors and will get the third Science of Discworld book somehow. If you have a copy ...:)

i love terry pratchett ever since i first read him and have got almost all his books. the thing about him is that you can read any of his books many a time over and still be shocked and amazed at how brilliant it is. the science of the discworld series are truly amazing and mind altering. a must read :)

I love these books. It's brilliant how they blend round world science with disc world narrative and keep it all flowing.

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